

# MEND the GAP

## ENHANCEMENT PROJECT CRITERIA (FINAL)

The criteria below provide a framework for consideration of potential projects or schemes funded through the Mend the Gap programme.

Mend the Gap is not a grant scheme but seeks to identify and support projects that will contribute towards meeting the programme’s overall vision of softening the scars left by the electrification of the Great Western mainline by enhancing and enriching the outstanding landscape that links the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs for wildlife, residents and visitors.

In some cases, Mend the Gap projects may be led entirely by an external organisation, in others Mend the Gap or the AONBs may work in partnership with external organisations or take the lead themselves to develop and deliver projects.

Mend the Gap is interested in hearing from organisations and individuals who share some of the programme’s objectives, who may already be making a difference within the programme area and/or the AONBs.

GENERAL CRITERIA
<b>Mend the Gap Programme Vision</b>
<p>All projects must be aligned with the programme vision:</p> <p><i>The outstanding landscape that links the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs will be enhanced and enriched for wildlife, residents and visitors, helping to heal and soften the scars left by electrification of the Great Western main line.</i></p>
<b>AONB Statutory Purposes</b>
<p>All projects must have a direct fit with one or both of the AONB statutory purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONBs</li> <li>• Increase understanding and enjoyment of the AONBs<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>
<p>Projects should be within the core programme area (see map below).</p> <p>If part or whole of the project is outside the core programme area there must be strong reasons to justify inclusion (for example landscape/habitat connectivity or clear and direct benefits to communities within the programme area).</p> <p>Projects can take place on publicly or privately owned land. Where a project is on private land, there must be clear benefits to the wider landscape, biodiversity, heritage and/or community.</p>

<sup>1</sup> ‘Increasing understanding and enjoyment of the AONB’ is a statutory purpose of the Chilterns Conservation Board, but for the purposes of the Mend the Gap programme will be taken to apply across the entire programme area. In fulfilling its statutory purposes the Conservation Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities. Where there is a conflict between conserving the special qualities of the AONB and its use or enjoyment, greater weight must be given to conservation and enhancement.

<b>Network Rail Agreement</b>
All project funded through Mend the Gap <u>must</u> address one or both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate the visual harm caused by electrification.</li> <li>• Enhance the AONBs by contributing towards compensating for the unmitigated visual harm caused by the electrification of the railway.</li> </ul>
Projects must be primarily for non-economic purposes
Projects must comply with State Aid Rules
<b>Financial</b>
Projects must be robustly costed and demonstrate value for money.
Wherever possible and appropriate projects should include match funding – either cash (eg funding leveraged in from other sources) or in kind (eg volunteer time or non-cash contributions).
<i>Note that Mend the Gap can be used as match funding for other grants or schemes. Mend the Gap does not have to be the ‘majority funder’ in a project.</i>
Projects must comply with the Chilterns Conservation Board’s procurement regulations*.
<b>Legacy</b>
The benefits of the project should be sustainable beyond completion of the work and should contribute towards an enduring legacy for the Mend the Gap programme.

<b>ENHANCEMENT PROJECT CRITERIA</b>
<b>All Enhancement Projects should directly address one or more of the Enhancement Criteria below, in addition to the General Criteria above</b>
<p><b>Landscape</b> Benefit, conserve, maintain and enhance the protected landscapes of the AONBs taking into appropriate consideration the distinctive landscape character and features of the programme area.</p>
<p><b>Nature &amp; Biodiversity</b> Benefit local biodiversity and nature recovery through contributing towards wildlife spaces and networks that are larger, more connected, of better quality, more resilient and better managed (including improvements to land management practices).</p> <p>Enhance and protect species and habitats that are characteristic of the programme area and/or that are local priorities within the programme area for recovery and protection.</p>
<p><b>Heritage</b> Encourage understanding and appreciation of the distinctive historic environment and features of the programme area by local communities and visitors.</p> <p>Protect and enhance historic landscape features<sup>2</sup>.</p>

<sup>2</sup> The programme is focussed on landscapes and historic features and structures within the landscapes, rather than on buildings. It is therefore not anticipated that the programme will fund general repairs/conservation/enhancement of historic buildings. There may be exceptions, but these will be on a case-by-case basis.

**Access, Understanding & Recreation**

Create inclusive opportunities for communities within the programme area and visitors to it to better understand, enjoy and appreciate the distinctive character of the programme area and the surrounding protected landscapes.

Enhance opportunities for sustainable access, recreation and enjoyment for both local communities and visitors, including through better links and improved connectivity.

Encourage a sense of connection to and pride in the special landscapes of the programme area in local communities.

Encourage sustainable use and enjoyment of the programme area for health and wellbeing.

**Sustainable tourism and local economy**

Encourage sustainable tourism and recreation and/or support local businesses and producers which respect and promote the special qualities of the programme area and AONBs.

**Added Value Objectives for Enhancement Projects**

**In considering the suitability of projects for support through Mend the Gap, greater priority will be given to those that fit with one or more of the Added Value Objectives described below**

**Strategic** - projects that are strategic, with potential for landscape-scale benefits.

**Partnerships** - projects that create opportunities for strengthening partnerships with key partners/ stakeholders and/or that build new partnerships.

**Cross-boundary working** – projects that create opportunities for joint-working across the AONBs: treating the programme area as a single landscape.

**Local community involvement** – projects that include opportunities for people from local communities most affected by the electrification to be directly involved.

**New audiences** – projects that create inclusive opportunities to connect new and more diverse audiences with the AONBs.

**Volunteering** – projects that include opportunities for volunteer involvement in delivery and that support increased volunteering within the programme area.

**\*CCB PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS**

Goods and services shall be ordered in accordance with the following arrangements.

<b>Value of Order</b>	<b>Quotation Requirements</b>
Up to £2,000	Best endeavours to seek value for money
£2,000 - £15,000	Three quotations
£15,000 - £50,000	Three written quotations
Over £50,000	Three written tenders

# MEND the GAP – Core Programme Area

